

Durham's Community-Wide Efforts to Combat Gangs

September 2005



What Contributes to Gangs in Durham?

Durham, a community that continues to grow and transform, is committed to celebrating and promoting its colorful and historic past while focusing on the future and the needs of its citizens. With its rich history, growing economy, a diversity of cultural and educational benefits, and relatively low cost-of-living compared to nearby communities, it's easy to see why so many people call Durham home.

But there is another side to Durham, a side that plagues thousands of other communities both large and small, that is of great concern to this community. Throughout the United States, the specter of gangs has invaded all cities, counties, towns, and communities. The City and County of Durham are no exception with approximately 525 documented gang members within the community.

There is one major difference that sets Durham apart from many other communities – Durham's willingness to face its problems head-on and deal with the systemic challenges that entice some of its youth into the dangerous world of gang life.

The community has identified several factors that contribute to the root causes of crime and gangs in Durham. These root causes are:

- Poverty and substandard housing
- Lack of education
- Unemployment or underemployment
- Family issues
- Substance abuse
- Prior criminal convictions

As a community, the citizens of Durham are tackling these root causes to eliminate the allure of gang life. These combined efforts fall into four major categories: prevention, intervention, enforcement, and re-entry.

Community Response #1: Prevention

As a community, Durham is focusing many of its efforts on preventing its youth from joining gangs. These efforts come from different entities within Durham, including local law enforcement initiatives,

educational and employment outreach efforts by local government, and community programs that offer a different path for Durham's youth.

City of Durham Police Department

The Durham Police Department's (DPD) philosophy is that knowledge and awareness are crucial keys to gang prevention and eradication. The DPD's Gang Unit takes a proactive stance on the community's gang situation. The department realizes that prevention is as important as enforcement and that community-wide support is needed to eradicate the gang problem. Some of the DPD's programs that focus on prevention are:

Project Safe Neighborhoods (P.S.N.) is Durham's comprehensive, strategic response to gun violence in the community.

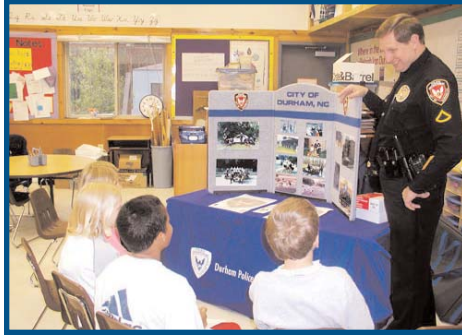
P.S.N. focuses on partnering federal, state, and local law enforcement with local community and faith-based organizations to develop research-supported strategies to reduce violent crime. P.S.N. works closely with at-risk teens and gang members and has formed partnerships with N.C. Central University and the City's Durham Parks and Recreation (DPR) Department to provide mentoring and after-school activities for at-risk youths.



Gang Resistance Education and Training

(G.R.E.A.T.) Summer Youth Camp is for Durham youth ages 11 through 14 to teach an anti-gang curriculum to students in middle and elementary schools. The campers participate in field trips, sporting activities, and educational classes. The participants also attend programs to introduce them to different areas of the criminal justice system including police, magistrates, judges, detention, criminal and civil law, the district attorney, and probation and parole.

Durham Police Explorers Program provides youth ages 14 to 21 opportunities to learn about law enforcement. Police Explorers learn such skills as directing traffic, handling domestic disturbances, making felony vehicle stops, and handcuffing prisoners. The program is designed to build character and leadership skills, promote citizenship and career development, and develop personal and mental fitness.



The DPD Public Housing Unit works in partnership with the Durham Housing Authority and public housing residents to promote a sense of community awareness and responsibility. DPD officers are assigned to various public housing communities and work with residents to address crime and quality-of-life concerns. Public housing officers primarily patrol on bicycles and on foot to make themselves more approachable by residents. Officers also provide after-school tutoring programs and organize special events for children in Durham's public housing communities.



Durham County Sheriff's Office

The Office of the Sheriff is also focusing on preventive efforts through a variety of programs. The initiatives include:

Sheriff's Community-Oriented Policing Effort (S.C.O.P.E.) is dedicated to the community policing effort and has a unit designed to identify and resolve community problems as well as enhancing the safety and quality of life for many residents of the community.

School Resource Officer Program (S.R.O.) places officers in schools in an effort to create and maintain a safer learning environment. These officers fulfill three major roles - law enforcement officer, counselor, and teacher.

Sheriff's Office Juvenile Assistance Program (S.O.J.A.), a cooperative effort between the Durham County Sheriff's Office, Durham Social Services, and Durham Juvenile Services, matches at-risk youth with mentors who are experienced at working with young people. The youth chosen for the program are identified by Durham County Social Services or Juvenile Services as in need of mentoring.

Durham Workforce Development Board Youth Council

Two of the root causes of crime in any community are a lack of education for some of its citizens as well as unemployment and underemployment. The Durham community is taking a proactive approach to offer training and employment opportunities to its at-risk youth. One of the groups leading the City's effort is the Durham Workforce Development Board Youth Council. This council provides a unique opportunity for the local community to create a system of activities and services that enable youth to be successful in education and the workplace. Some of the programs that specifically target at-risk youth are:

Transitions To Opportunity Forums provide out-of-school youth with information on available training and educational opportunities they can access to get back in school whether it be traditional or alternative.

Novanet Credit Recovery allows high school students the opportunity to repeat a high school course they have failed. This program is designed to help keep students from falling too far behind their classmates and dropping out of school.

Durham Literacy Center Teen Career Academy provides an opportunity for out-of-school youth to obtain their General Education Development diploma and progress to higher education or meaningful employment.

Working Hard On Achieving (W.H.O.A.) Program is part of the summer youth employment program which provides year-round, comprehensive education and support services to high school youth. Youth involved are guaranteed employment during the summer if they show continuous improvement in school.

Center for Employment Training Youth Start Program provides vocational skills training and job placement assistance to out-of-school youth.

Mayor's Youth Works Summer Program partners with Joblink/Employment Security Commission, the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce, and Durham

Technical Community College to provide employment opportunities for area youth during the summer.

Youth Employed and Succeeding (Y.E.S.) Program is a customer-driven youth development system that focuses on the individual needs of at-risk youth. The program is designed around a service provider responsible for developing a personalized strategy for each youth and then refers that youth to an appropriate program which best meets their individual needs.

Durham AreaCorp (DAC) works with at-risk youth to provide paid and unpaid employment, life skills training, such as leadership training, resume writing, interviewing techniques, money management, time management, and dressing for success, as well as, occupational skills and adult mentoring.

JobLink Outreach Mobile Unit delivers career service outreach by bringing information directly into Durham's high-risk neighborhoods.

City of Durham Department of Housing and Community Development

The City's Department of Housing and Community Development is engaged in numerous programs and initiatives which impact the City's overall effort to combat crime and gang activity. Specific programs and initiatives are:

Community Enforcement and Nuisance Abatement Team (C.E.N.A.T.) is a joint effort with other City departments including police, solid waste, public works, animal control, and human relations in addition to community groups such as the Inter-Neighborhood Council, Partners Against Crime, and the Citizen Observer Patrol. The C.E.N.A.T. team regularly visits pre-selected target areas not only to identify and cite code violations and nuisances, but also to speak directly with neighborhood residents about any concerns they may have.

Community Relations Coordinators, serving as liaisons to the City's Partners Against Crime groups, engages in a broad array of efforts to facilitate the creation and strengthening of neighborhood organizations.

Homeownership Initiative, a key element in bringing stability to Durham's more distressed neighborhoods, provided homeownership loans to 60 first-time buyers in 2005 in addition to projects developing housing at Barnes Avenue and Gattis Street. This initiative also partners with non-profit organizations, such as Self Help, Durham Community Land Trustees, and Habitat for Humanity, to produce affordable housing for

Durham's residents.

Housing Rehabilitation and Repair is another key element in the elimination of substandard housing to further stabilize Durham neighborhoods. This past year, the City provided repair or housing rehabilitation assistance to approximately 130 homeowners.

City of Durham Parks & Recreation

Another approach to helping at-risk youth avoid the allure of gang life is through the City's Durham Parks and Recreation (DPR) Department. DPR offers classes and programs to youth ages 5 and older at 11 recreation centers through the City. In 2004-2005, DPR served more than 36,000 youth through its programs including after school camps, summer camps, and programs in basketball, track, soccer, baseball, softball, flag football, and tennis. The goal is to provide Durham's youth with other activities to keep them off the streets and away from gang recruitment and violence. Some of these activities include:

Annual training, provided by DPD to DPR staff, regarding risk factors, indicators of gang involvement, and steps to take if staff suspect gang activity on site or within programs.

Gang Violence Forum, hosted in August 2005, in conjunction with Partners for Youth and Durham Companions, Inc.

DPR Youth Team involves eight youth ages 13 to 18 that plan and provide activities for other youth in the community. This past year, the team hosted two "Youth Explosion" events highlighting sports, educational activities, and services available for youth and their families.

City of Durham Youth Council is composed of 54 youth who serve on various boards and commissions to provide input on decisions and policies that affect youth in the community.



Annual "Community Days" at all DPR recreation centers to bring the community together and highlight what programs and services are available at DPR facilities and in the City.

Durham Community Efforts

Men of Vision is a collaboration of caring, talented, and resourceful men in the Durham community who have organized to create a brighter, more promising future for at-risk youth. The group has established a formal partnership with the Triangle Chapter of 100 Black Men of America. With emphasis on young, African-American males and their families, Men of Vision aims to reverse the high rates of dropout, incarceration, homicide, and unemployment.



The Durham Roundtable, a group of community leaders and professionals, is firmly committed to undertaking the community initiatives of crime, education, healthcare, and housing. The Roundtable's process is based on its belief that informed, committed, and broad-based community leaders must lead efforts in coordinating local resources and leveraging external resources to achieve Durham's desired future.

The Religious Coalition for a Non-Violent Durham, in partnership with the Durham Police Department, aims to reduce the number of gun-related crimes, including fatal shootings. The coalition also sponsors the "Hands Without Guns Program," an educational art activity that urges parents and children to pledge to use their hands for creation and not destruction.

Durham Congregations in Action (DCIA) is an interfaith, inter-racial organization of 57 congregations. DCIA ministries address hunger, poverty, health care, homelessness, peace, and reconciliation in Durham.

Community Response #2: Intervention

A secondary component utilized in the Durham community is to intervene with youth already involved in gangs. The Durham community intervenes in two ways – directly with the youths involved in gangs and by notifying their parents.

City of Durham Police Department

Strategies to Alleviate and Reduce Senseless Violence (S.T.A.R.S.) Program, which started in

Durham in 2000, is a partnership between law enforcement officers and community members that provides violent criminals, including gang members, with only two options: shape up with the help of the community or face harsh penalties if they get in trouble again for a violent crime. S.T.A.R.S. meetings are held quarterly and more than 200 people are now classified as Durham S.T.A.R.S. offenders. Durham also participates in S.T.A.R.S. meetings in the cities of High Point, Winston-Salem, and Greensboro. A case manager works directly with S.T.A.R.S. offenders to help them find employment and vocational training to prevent a relapse back into gang life.

Parental Notifications are provided by gang investigators to the youth's parents when they deal with gang members, suspected gang members, or at-risk youth under the age of 18.

Durham County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff's Initiative of Evaluation and Gang Enforcement (S.I.E.G.E.) focuses on juvenile gang member's criminal activities within its jurisdiction therefore enabling the tracking, assessing, and development of intervention strategies.

Community Response #3: Enforcement

When prevention and intervention are not enough, the Durham community takes an active role in removing dangerous gang members from the community. Durham has stepped up its enforcement actions through the formation of special units in both the Durham Police Department and the Durham Sheriff's Office to specifically address the gang issue in Durham.

City of Durham Police Department

DPD Gang Unit, formed in 2000, has doubled in size and now consists of 30 officers divided into three teams. DPD's Gang Unit, which is part of the Department's Special Operations Division, has placed an increased emphasis on proactive enforcement as well as intelligence gathering. Gang officers also provide gang information and prevention presentations to the community, making presentations to more than 3,400 people in 2005.

GangNet, computer software that allows investigators to track gang members, gang affiliates/associates, suspected gang members, vehicles, and locations for gang members and gang activities, was purchased to

document and track gang activity in Durham. This month is the one-year anniversary of the start of GangNet training. In the past year, the DPD's Intelligence Unit has trained 259 DPD users and 67 users from 15 other agencies on the system, totaling 326 statewide users. Agencies currently on the system are the DPD, Durham Co. Sheriff's Office, Forsyth County agencies, Town of Wilson Police Department, City of Raleigh Police Department, Town of Chapel Hill Police Department, Duke University Police Department, State Bureau of Investigation, New Hanover County Sheriff's Office, Town of Apex Police Department, Town of Graham Police Department, City of Burlington Police Department, and the Durham County District Attorney's Office. Cumberland County agencies and the Town of Cary Police Department will be participating soon.

Weed and Seed Initiative is a program that aims to prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in targeted high-crime neighborhoods across Durham. The strategy involves a two-pronged approach. The DPD, other law enforcement agencies, and prosecutors cooperate in "weeding out" criminals who participate in violent crime and drug abuse by attempting to prevent their return to the targeted area. Human services agencies cooperate by "seeding" programs in the targeted area, encompassing prevention, intervention, treatment, and neighborhood revitalization.

Durham Crimestoppers is a program that involves the public, the media, and the DPD in the fight against crime. It offers anonymity and cash rewards to people who furnish information leading to the arrest and indictment of felony crime offenders. Over the past year, Durham Crimestoppers has led to the capture of over 300 convicted felons, a number of which were gang-affiliated.

Partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies to provide more available resources to tackle the gang problem and allow for federal prosecutions, which often result in longer sentences. These partnerships include:

- **ATF Task Force**, a partnership between the DPD and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), was formed 10 years ago to focus on violent crimes and firearms violations. An ATF satellite office was opened in Durham in 2004, and is staffed by one full-time ATF agent who works closely with Durham officers. The ATF Task Force has taken approximately

200 cases to federal court since the inception of the partnership. The DPD/ATF partnership has been so successful that it has been adopted as a model by the City of Raleigh.

- **DEA Task Force**, a partnership between the DPD and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), was formed 15 years ago to focus on illegal substance trafficking and abuse. During the past year, at least 20 people have been convicted with sentences ranging from 80 to 262 months.

- **FBI Task Force**, a partnership between the DPD and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), was formed 20 years ago. Task force members have charged more than 25 people in the past two years with most of the cases being drug-related.

- **Other Federal Partnerships**, including the U.S. Marshals Services to locate wanted suspects and the U.S. Postal Service on fraud cases.

- **N.C. Community Corrections** along with the DPD Gang Unit perform monthly operations targeting probation violators and violent criminals.

City of Durham Department of Solid Waste Management

Impact Team works closely with the DPD Gang Unit by quickly removing gang graffiti after the DPD Gang Unit has collected the necessary evidence.

Durham County Sheriff's Office

Truancy and Probation Program where officers work directly with the juvenile probation officers and Durham Public Schools. These officers provide security for the juvenile officers, mentoring of juveniles, and charging juveniles with petitions when appropriate. This program reinforces the seriousness of the court ruling imposed when these youth were placed on probation. The officers enforce the laws of North Carolina by serving citations, warrants, and petitions when necessary. The program also educates parents and children regarding their attendance at school and the consequences of not attending school.

Durham Community Efforts

Assistant District Attorney/Special Gang Prosecutor, added to the Durham County District Attorney's Office in 2002, prosecutes gang members in court and shares gang intelligence information with law enforcement officers.

Community Response #4: Re-Entry

The final component in Durham's comprehensive response to gangs is the re-entry of convicted felons back into the community with employment and training opportunities to prevent a relapse back into criminal activities or gang life. Again, the community takes an integrated approach with both the City and County of Durham providing opportunities for ex-offenders as well as local faith-based organizations to help these citizens get back on their feet and become productive members of society.

City of Durham

The City of Durham's Re-entry Hiring Program, in partnership with Durham County's Criminal Justice Resource Center, the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce, and the Durham JobLink Career Center, offers City employment to recently released inmates.

Durham JobLink Career Center has an ex-offender specialist on staff to assist newly released ex-offenders in finding employment and training.

County of Durham

The County of Durham's Criminal Justice Resource Center reduces crime in the community by reducing recidivism through highly structured programs where offenders learn to modify behavior patterns that lead to criminal activity.

Durham Community Efforts

Reentry Entrepreneurial Partnerships Aimed at Individual and Community Restoration (R.E.P.A.I.R.) Project, a four-month program funded by the U.S.

Department of Justice and the North Carolina Department of Corrections, provides ex-offenders with training through Durham Technical

Community

College in the construction trades in addition to classroom instruction on life skills.



Reconciliation and Re-entry Ministry, sponsored by the Coalition for a Non-Violent Durham, the Durham Congregations in Action, and the Durham County Criminal Justice Resource Center, helps recently released felons find the resources they need to succeed in the Durham community.

Where Do We Go From Here?

It's evident that the Durham community is tackling the problem of gangs in four, strategic approaches from a community-wide perspective. Durham's willingness to face its problems head-on and deal with the systemic challenges is apparent in its coordinated approach in dealing with the root causes of crime. Durham may not have all the answers to preventing and eradicating gangs from its community, but it is committed to continuing to seek solutions to protect its youth from gangs where their only future options are incarceration, violence, or death.

To learn more about Durham's efforts, or to get involved, contact:

- City of Durham Manager's Office: 919-560-4222
- County of Durham Manager's Office: 919-560-0000
- Durham Police Department: 919-560-4322
- Durham County Sheriff's Office: 919-560-0897
- City of Durham Parks and Recreation Department: 919-560-4355
- City of Durham Housing and Community Development Department : 919-560-4570
- City of Durham Office of Economic and Employment Development: 919-560-4965
- Religious Coalition for a Non-Violent Durham: 919-489-3531
- Durham Congregations in Action: 919-688-2036

For additional resource materials that are designed for middle school and high school students and can be used by educators, guidance counselors, coaches, club sponsors, advisors, after school facilitators, parents, and students visit http://www.courtvtv.com/choices/al_roker_menace/index.html.